

Interview with Verena Daley  
in Eastham, Massachusetts

~~Interview #1~~  
by Vivian Andrist  
September 23, 1980

Q: This is an interview with Verena Daley. It's the first interview in the Oral History Project by the Eastham Historical Society in Eastham, Massachusetts.

Mrs. Daley and I are sitting in her home, where she lives during the summer, and which is also a museum of the Eastham Historical Society. Mrs. Daley does not live here in the winter, and a little later on we will talk about the history of the house and so forth. I do want to give the date. It's September 23rd, 1980, and my name as interviewer is Vivian Andrist.

Verena, let's talk about you personally. When and where were you born?

Verena: I was born in Millis, Mass. March 1st, 1895.

Q: And can you tell me something about your name? It's unusual.

Verena: Well, my father's only aunt, great-aunt, was named Verena, and when I was young I just disliked it terribly, because nobody called me by it. Finally, when I was a sophomore in high school-- I can remember it-- I was reading this book and there was a Lady

Verena-- it was an English story. So after that I never minded the name of Verena.

Q: Can you tell me about your father's family? <sup>were</sup> Where/they from and what was his full name?

Verena: His name was Francis Springer, and his ancestors came with William Penn, I think, in Pennsylvania. They were Dutch and Quakers. But his folks evidently went to Ontario and he was born there. Then he came to the States when he was seventeen and he married my mother in Millis, Mass. in 1894.

Q: And what was her family like?

Verena: Well, she was born in Nova Scotia. Her father, James Findlay, was an engineer in the English Navy and so, of course, traveled all over the world. So my mother's brothers and sisters, they were all born, it seems, in different places. Some in the islands and around, but she was born in Mount Uniacke, Nova Scotia. Her name was Sarah Finlay. They were Scotch. My grandfather wouldn't have it spelled any other way. He was typical Scotch. My grandmother was Scotch.

Q: Did you know them personally?

Verena: Oh, yes. yes.

Q: Everybody, the whole family then, lived around in the Millis area?

Verena: Well, not-- I was only there a year, and then my father

went to Hopedale to work in a corporation. They were there a short time, and then to Milford, Mass., and that's where I was really brought up.

And then when I was twelve, why, my father bought a farm in Mendon, which is a very small old town, about sixteen miles south of Worcester. And so my husband was born and brought up there and we lived there until we decided to come to the Cape.

Q: Your husband's family-- was he born and brought up in this town, did you say, just south of Worcester?

Verena: In Mendon, yes. Oh, yes. His mother was of real old Yankee stock. Mary Pickering her name was, Daley. And his father came from Ireland, whichever is North or South, whichever is Protestant, he was a Protestant Irish. I didn't know him at all, but his mother lived until 1929 and I knew her real well. Beautiful woman.

Q: And what was his name, your husband?

Verena: Raymond. Raymond Leroy Daley.

Q: And how did you happen to meet?

Verena: Oh, we went to school together.

Q: School sweethearts?

Verena: Well, not-- I chummed around with his sisters, so I don't know, we never were very close, you know, till later.

Q: And when were you married, what was the date?

Verena: 1916.

Q: Did he go off to the World War I?

Verena: Oh, yes. Yes, he was overseas. He was gone over a year and a half.

Q: And what did he serve in, the Army?

Verena: Yes. He was in a special division with mortar guns or something. But he was lucky he wasn't in the trenches. He had special training at Devons, and so when they got over across they found out that this group knew more about the weapon than some of them did, so they stayed in one place and trained other fellows. So he was fortunate that way.

Q: Do you remember what happened in your town at the signing of the Armistice?

Verena: Oh, yes. We had a four corners near us and the watering trough there, and we all had a big bonfire. We had one the week before, when that false report came around. So then we had another one at the Armistice. But he didn't get home till the March after that.

Q: And what did he do when he got home?

Verena: Well, he and some other fellows went in business, a small soft drink bottling plant. So he was the chemist.

Q: So then how did you happen to come to Eastham?

Verena: Well, a friend of my sister's-- the first year we came to the Cape in 1930, we found a place over in-- on the Brewster-Harwich line on Pleasant Lake there. Or my sister found it. She was living over in Harwich.

So then at Christmas time I always had my family, because my father died when I was young. And so my sister said, where are you going? Are you going to the Cape? And I said, well, I and the children are going, but I don't know whether he's going or not. Because he enjoyed it, you know, but he hated to take a vacation. He was one of these workaholics. So he didn't say anything.

So she said, well, Beulah-- this was a friend of her's in Providence-- has a cottage down at Cook's Brook in North Eastham. She said, would you rent it? I said, sure. It didn't make any difference to me. I didn't know anything anyway. So we came down to the cottage, which was very primitive. It was on the right hand side of the road, which is low, and, oh, it was awful hot, and we used to go across the street, up on the bank, and sit and watch the ocean and say what a beautiful spot for a cottage.

So we talked about it all winter and finally we went down in May and found out who owned it and bought a piece of land, and then built a cottage when we had vacations in the summer. So that's how I happened to start coming to Eastham.

Q: What year was this?

Verena: 1931. That we bought it, and then in '32 we built the cottage.

Q: What was Eastham like then?

Verena: Well, I wrote some notes here. Sam Brackett had a department store, as it were. It's still there now, operated as an antique place, I think, at the corner of Oak Road and Massasoit. And he carried everything, from groceries, of course, to stock feed and coal and everything. And it was quite a place to go into. We used to get quite a kick out of it.

Then from his store, going north, all that land was bare, except one house, Maurice Wiley's. And he, Sam Brackett, had clear beyond what is the Catholic Church now, and he had an asparagus farm and turnips, white turnips, the Cape turnips, which are wonderful. You can't hardly buy them now.

And then on the other side there was a couple of houses, and down Cook's Brook, where we had the cottage, there was only four cottages at that time. And now, oh, down there and on all the cross roads, there's hundreds of them. It's quite different. We could go out any time and get a bushel of quahogs easily, and along the edge of the shore there, there were steamed clams. And then in October we could walk out in these little pools, there were the scallops we could just pick up by the bushel. And crabs out there, the big crabs. We used to go out in the boat and just reach down and get them.

Q: You started a business down here, didn't you?

Verena: Well, that wasn't until I retired in 1949. And we moved down. We sold out up home and came down here to live. We used it

just summers, and before that, my husband and the children were here summers and took care of the cottages. We had five cottages.

Q: Where were these? Down on Cook's Brook?

Verena: On Cook's Brook, yes. So his was so bad, he couldn't move his arms, or he'd get into wheezing and so forth, so he had to give up his job. He couldn't just take-- and so he'd come down summers with the kids and stay and take care of the cottages and then I'd come down weekends.

Q: What were you doing back home?

Verena: Well, I worked for the Worcester County Electric Company doing home service work. Cook in schools and things like that. Somebody had to work, you know. The kids to put through school. So then as soon as the children got out of college in '49, why, then I decided to give up my work and sell out and come down here and live.

Then, I'd always been very very busy, and I was uneasy. I mean, nothing particularly to do. So I started to have a home bakery here. In the summer.

Q: Where was that?

Verena: Right here.

Q: In this house?

Verena: Yes. I had a glass case and a counter and so on and so forth. Did all the cooking and so forth and my husband helped what he could. And my grandson, Roger, he was young then, so he used to

help me grease pans and so on and so forth. He was good help.

Q: When did you decide to buy the cottages and buy this?

Verena: Oh no, oh no, oh no. We kept those cottages for income, because we needed that for our income. And so we had the cottages and we bought this. Then with the bake shop money-- that was before we had Social Security, of course, we were younger then. So I took the bake shop money and we went to Florida winters, because I figured the trip down and back, why, we saved enough fuel, winter fuel, to pay for that, and we had to eat wherever we were, so it was just the rent we had to pay down there. So we managed all right, because warm weather was the only thing that was <sup>good</sup> stood for Ray. When it was warm, he was real good, and he got so he was excellent by going to Florida winters.

So I had the bake shop from-- at first I had just a table outside. I would bake up a lot of stuff and people would stop. Then in '52 I really went-- got up at quarter of four every morning and worked till half past eight or a quarter of nine. People came all hours of the day. You couldn't shut up, say, at one o'clock. They kept coming.

So finally in '62 it got too much for me, so I just closed up shop and stopped.

Q: Did you both get involved in activities in the town?

Verena: Ray never did. Well, he couldn't do too much. I mean, at that time it bothered him. I was one of the first ones on the



committee for the Eastham Handbook in '53. I was on for ten years. And then I was involved with the church. I was church superintendent of the Sunday School.

Q: Which church?

Verena: The Methodist Church. And then I was Church Treasurer for ten years, until it got so-- I was in Florida so much that I decided that-- it was hard to get anybody at first. One of the fellows that worked in the bank would do it in the winter when I was gone and I'd take over when I got back. But it got so he couldn't do it, so I just gave it up.

Q: Didn't they build a new church?

Verena: No, they moved the church back, and we were very involved in that. That was in '52 or so. My son was a builder and he took charge of the men, and they had, of course, a professional move the church. And then it was all voluntary labor. He took charge of it and on Saturdays there'd be a gang of, say, a dozen fellows. They built the cement walls and everything. He took up architectural construction when he went to Wentworth, so he could do anything. He could do the cement work and everything. So Saturday noontime I'd cook up a big beef stew or pies and things and walk down and feed them.

So we had a seventy-five hundred dollar mortgage and we paid it off in about three years. And at that time it was hard struggling, you know. The church wasn't very prosperous, but between-- and

then I put on smorgasbord suppers every other week all summer for the three years. And Clayton Horton had an auction, a big auction, every year for those three years. And <sup>Jenny</sup> ~~Jimmy~~ Sparrow-- there was a woman's group that used to hook rugs at that time, so they would put on a big show over at the hall which earned quite a little money, so in that way we paid off that mortgage and it worked out.

Q: Whose idea was the Handbook? How did that happen to get started?

Verena: Well, I can't just remember, but they called a meeting-- I guess the Selectmen. I guess there was a man, Mr. Robinson, that came around from some agency that used to get groups, and he would kind of run the thing. We'd get the ads, but he would do the layout work and so forth, that first year.

Well, he called this meeting and so everybody got to talking, and, of course, I was always into things more or less. So they appointed this committee and I was one of the committee. And so then-- oh, there was a lot of talk, oh, you know, it would be hard to get ads and so forth. So I guess I spoke up and I said, I don't know any reason why we just can't go around and ask people and get things done. I guess that's why I was on the committee. And I did. I went around to, you know, the establishments and we got the ads without any difficulty.

So that year Mr. Robinson, he did the layout work, so I caught on right a lot, because I'd done a lot of office work while I was working for the company, in my spare time. So I knew about layout work and so forth, and making stencils and so on and so forth. So it worked out well.

So then the next year we decided that we'd do it ourselves, and I really did the layout work, you know. Placing the ads and so on and so forth, and then had different ones write little things. So I did it for ten years, and then I decided that I wasn't here, you see. Come January you have to start getting it together, and I'd do a lot of it before I went. We didn't go down as early then as I do now. So I just dropped that.

Q: And when did you start working with the Historical Society?

Verena: Well, not really until I gave the house to them. After my husband died in '72, I kept thinking what's going to happen to this house, because we'd spent so much-- so many hours, as well as money, in it, and being in the commercial zone here, I felt so that probably after I was gone-- it isn't a good house for a family or anything, because you can't insulate it and leave it the way it is. So it wasn't any good to leave to my children.

So I kept thinking about it, and kept thinking, well-- and I knew, of course, they had the Schoolhouse. So I approached Fred Jewell. Had him come in and talked with him. So then he was quite enthused about it. So then they had a meeting, I guess, and so they accepted my offer, and I had the privilege of using it summers as long as I wanted to, because it is a beautiful house in summer. It's always cool and so forth.

So that was really the first of my really being-- I had joined before that, paid dues, but I'd never been really active. Well, in '64 I offered down to the Schoolhouse to-- I told the woman that

was head of the hostesses that I'd be glad to serve once a week, because I-- you know, it was free. But at that time there was a feeling, if you weren't a Cape Codder, you weren't supposed to do anything as far as the Historical Society was concerned. So once that summer she did call me. I guess she got in a jam. So I went down. I went down early and got acquainted with the stuff out there, and I thought-- I'm not afraid to talk to people and I enjoyed it. So I talked with different ones. I thought I did a pretty good job. So I told her then I'd be happy to do it any time, once a week if she wished, and so I never heard another word. So that was the end of my offering to be a hostess.

Q: What was her name? You're not going to say?

Verena: I guess I'd better not tell you.

Q: All right. I understand.

I think that attitude is changing somewhat.

Verena: It is changing. Very much. And my attitude now, in getting hostesses,-- in fact, I went to a little meeting yesterday morning over to the hall, so I got to talking with this woman. So I guess someone said, did you ever go into the Swift-Daley house? She said, no, I'm sorry, I haven't. And I got to talking and sizing her up and I said, how would you like to be a hostess next summer at the Swift-Daley house? Oh, she says, I'm not a member of the Historical Society. I said, I don't care whether you're a member or not. I said, this is something entirely to do with the hostesses, and I

said, I'd be only too glad. Well, she said, I think I'd like it. So I took her name and her telephone number. I've got a list. Everywhere I go, I talk to people, you know, whether they belong or not, because the attitude has been that it's been a closed thing and I think the more you get people of the town interested, the more the people you'll get in here. And so--

Q: I couldn't agree more.

Verena: And another thing, I think the Schoolhouse should be open five days a week, and I'm quite sure that I could man it.

Q: Get the people to come in?

Verena: Yes.

Q: I agree with you absolutely, and maybe next summer we could try it.

Verena: I think it should be planned soon, before the Handbook goes out and before other things. I mean, I think it should be planned, and in that there was a very good article this year and I think that it would be well to get in something for next year.

Q: I think so. We'll have to plan on that.

You have some notes there. Would you like to cover those?

Verena: I've been roaming here, so--

Q: Is there anything in there that you want to get on the record?

Verena: Perhaps the center of town here. In '39, when we bought

this, down at the corner of Samoset Road and Route 6 here, on the further corner, in front of where the Windmill is now, there on the corner was a little restaurant, and I think they also sold a few groceries. And then there was a big house and barn and then there was a smaller house. And then from the other corner, up to the Swift-Daley house, there was nothing. It was all just fields. The other side of this/<sup>there</sup>was a small realtor office, up near where the garage is now, and there was an old little building, a grocery store, had a one-pump gas pump out front, had about four little two-by-four overnight cottages in back, and then beyond that was all grass. Nothing. On the other side of the road, across from the Swift house, was the Ocean View Garage and one house, and then just this side of the Town Hall was an old house. And other than that, the center was all just farm land.

This place here, there was thirteen acres with the house when we bought it and it had been an asparagus farm, but it had been discontinued. The man that lived here and owned it died in 1916 and then the place was used, and a couple years after that this Stanley <sup>Horton</sup> Hawkins, Sr. bought it. He had a house down on Samoset Road and his land backed up to this farm land and he wanted more land for his asparagus farm. He cared nothing about this house and he did nothing about it. He rented it as long as it was rentable. And then, the ten years before we bought it, nobody lived in it. The windows were broken, the doors were hanging on the hinges~~x~~, and it was just a mess. But when I came-- I had looked for an old house to restore for quite a long time, but never found any that I was

satisfied with. Most had been changed. Partitions added or taken out, dormer windows put out or new floors put in and so on. But this house, when I came into it, I could see the floors were intact as far as being original, all the wainscoting and doors and everything. So right away I knew this was the house. It did require a lot of work, no question about it. It took ten summers to get the paint off downstairs. We had to use a blowtorch, a little flame, and then scrape. So my husband and I and daughter and son, why, we would scrape and finally got it down to the original wood. Because there were so many coats of paint on, cheap paint, that it couldn't be done anything else with. But everything, all the woodwork in the house is the original, except the doorway that was closed up when they put on the ell, and then they put another doorway in where I think a window was originally. But other than that-- and the doors are all pegged together and so forth.

Q: Who were the Swift's?

Verena: Well, Nathaniel Swift and his wife lived here from 1858 to '62, and a couple of years before that Gustavus Swift, a young fellow of seventeen, he came down here. He had a fight with his father. Up in Sandwich they lived. That's where the Swift's originated, after they came from England. And so Gustavus lived here, and then he started buying a pig and he had a little slaughterhouse down at Thumpertown Beach, and he would peddle that at the Cape. Then he'd buy perhaps a heifer and slaughter that and so forth. And then he got so he would drive to Brighton. There was the Brighton

stockyards up near Boston. And the man years ago, when we first bought it, told us that he as a little boy used to go with him, with Gustavus Swift, in the old Democrat and horse wagon, and drive to Brighton and get a couple of cows and drive them down, and it would take two weeks for them to go up and get the cows and bring them back.

So then in '62 Gustavus married Ann Higgins down in North Eastham. So the railroad had come as far as Barnstable at that time, so the cows could come down by freight to Barnstable. So Gustavus went to Barnstable after he was married, and they lived there a very short time, and then he went to Clinton, Mass. and operated there. Then he went to Lancaster, Mass., and somewhere outside of Boston. And then he went to Albany, New York and there he operated a big meat packing company.

Well, in six years he lived in six places. I have a book that his daughter wrote, Helen Swift, telling about her mother and father, and said that she was born and in six years she lived in six different places.

So finally, he knew the cattle came from the West, and so he decided that he would go to Chicago. So then he got in touch with this Nathaniel Swift that lived here and had him come to Albany to manage that plant, and then Gustavus, his family went to Chicago and founded the Swift Packing Company.

But today there's no Swift in the Swift Packing Company. Harold Swift retired a couple years ago and there's no relatives now. It's all strange people.

Q: And these are the people that are on the sign out here, the



Swift-Daley house?

Verena: Well, when we bought it, everybody called it the old Swift house. So we didn't know anything really about it. I think if I'd known they'd only lived here such a short time, I wouldn't have bothered with it, but we did continue to call it that. But they really had had nothing to do with the house. Joshua Knowles built the house in 1741 and his family lived here, descendants, for a hundred years. And then after that, there's no records. You see, the court-house in Barnstable burned then and all the records were lost. You know, who owned places and everything, so there's a long period there when nobody knew who was who.

So then after the Swift's-- I don't think the Swift's even owned this. I think they just probably rented it. I couldn't find out any records. And then I think it was just rented, until this Snow Y. Higgins and his wife came here, probably in the eighties. Then they ran the asparagus farm until he died. She died before, I don't know just which year, but he died in 1916, and then it was sold in 1918 by the heirs to this Stanley Hawkins. That was in 1918. Then we bought it in 1939, but it hadn't been lived in for ten years.

Q: Tell me about your children, so we can get that on the record.

Verena: Well, I had three, two boys and a girl. The oldest boy, Warren, he went out to the Middle West, and he loved animals and farms, so he was out there for a good many years. But in 1978 he had cancer and passed away.

So then Dorcas is the middle one and she graduated from Mendon

High and then went to Framingham Teachers College and graduated in Home Ec.

And then Marston, he graduated from Mendon High and he had joined up-- was drafted in the service. Of course World War II then. So he went right in the Army and he was in for two years. Across and so forth. And then he came back and went to Wentworth College and got his degree in architectural construction, and he did very well until four years ago. Someone had put up a staging and didn't nail it correctly, and he was taking it down and didn't realize and he fell forty feet on his shoulder, so it crushed it quite badly. But he's lucky. He didn't go back to building. He couldn't for a long time. So he works for the bank, the Five Cents Bank. But this past spring he built this house down on the pond here and he found that he could hammer and everything. So he knows he could go back to building if he wants to, but he isn't planning to at the present time.

But Dorcas and Marston both have done a lot to help in this house, in restoring it. No question about that.

Q: You moved down here-- you first came down in '31, you said.

Verena: Yes.

Q: Do you remember what effect the Depression had on Eastham? Do you have any recollections of it?

Verena: Well, you see, we really wasn't in contact with the people those ten years, because we were just down here summers, down to the cottage. So kind of isolated really, as far as-- . But when

we used to drive down in those years, the people along the route-- of course, that was 6-A now, there wasn't any 6-- the places looked, oh, pitiful. I mean, they weren't painted and you could see, I think, people were just existing. I guess life was pretty grim here. But we were fortunate in the Depression. My husband had a good job and I did. So-- and then we had three acres of land, so we used to have a big garden and always had a lot of animals, so we really didn't suffer at all in the Depression, because we were well fed. And that's when we built the cottages, because I took my money and just put it into land down there and built the cottages. So we were lucky, when he was not able to work, to have the cottage income, besides my own. So we got along all right.

Q: Where were you the day of Pearl Harbor?

Verena: I was in Mendon. That was '41. We were all in Mendon. I can't remember too much about it, to tell the truth. I can just remember we were horrified, of course, but I can't remember too much about it.

Q: Do you have any other notes there, Verena, that you wanted to touch on?

Verena: No, I think that's about-- you know, because I didn't know what-- . Oh, when we came down and used to go by the Schoolhouse, what is the Schoolhouse Museum now, at that time it was a school, until 1936, and then the new school was built. And then it was sold to private parties and then resold and, oh, it was in terrible shape.

So in '64, that was when they decided to do something about it.  
And I don't know too much about the actual operation.

Q: You weren't involved at that point?

Verena: No.

Q: You didn't know Otto Nickerson, did you?

Verena: Oh yes, I knew Otto. Not real well, you know, but I knew of him. Wonderful man.

Q: Did you ever hear any tales of the old families? Anything that would be sort of interesting as far as historians are concerned? Maybe local politics or local battles, as it were?

Verena: No, I didn't. My husband knew more, because, of course, he was here, and then this Billy Forest lived over where the Sun Restaurant is now and they used to go out fishing together. And, of course, he'd lived here all his life and he ran the little store there. He didn't then. He had sold it. But he always did and had the overnight places. So he used to tell Ray things. And then there was Abalena Doane up the road and Ray used to talk with him. But I guess I was always so busy that I didn't have much time to talk with different ones, and I didn't have the contacts. So I really didn't hear, you know, much about--

Q: Well, now you've given me the history of the house pretty much. I thought the next thing we might do is go through it room by room and describe what some of the things are and the history of them.

Let's sort of start here with the annex. When was the annex put on?

Verena: I'm not sure. Nobody seems to know. But probably a hundred or a hundred fifty years ago. Some time in the 1800's, but I don't know just when.

Q: You don't know who did it then?

Verena: No. Don't know who did it. It wasn't built well and we ripped it all to pieces really and insulated it and refinished the inside. And the outside too. This was resingled and everything at that time. Because this was an old back room, where we are now, and wasn't finished at all. So we made it comfortable.

Q: And of course put in the kitchen?

Verena: Well, yes. The kitchen was a kitchen, but there was not even a sink in it. And not a cupboard or anything. Of course, there was the pantry. Have you seen that?

Q: No, I haven't.

Verena: See, this was a pantry and the door came here, where the range is now. And I've got shelves in there that I've got things on, and this was, of course, all shelves. We left these. This was the pantry where they, you know, had dishes. But this room had absolutely nothing in it. The partition went across here and a little door there.

Q: So you built all of that?

Verena: Oh yes.

Q: Now tell me about the collections here. Did you do all of that or were they given to you or what?

Verena: Well, most of the things-- practically all the furniture in the house was mine. Practically all of it. But then, some of the things that I've collected have been given, the smaller things, you know.

Q: I think we'll turn this off now.

SIDE TWO: (Touring the Swift-Daley house)

Q: Now what do you call this room? This was the keeping room or living room?

Verena: This is the keeping room. Really like a family room today.

Q: And what did you have to do to it when you moved in?

Verena: Well, the first thing, the three fireplaces, the mortar was all crumbled, badly, and we couldn't use them. So we had them taken down to the ground and then rebuilt, with new flue lining and new brick up through. But we saved all the old brick. So the way they are now, the old brick are the hearths and the face of the fireplace, and it was put back just exactly the way it was originally. So we can use the three fireplaces at one time, and we used to use them a great deal. I don't bother now. It's too much work.

Q: What is the cupboard to the right?

Verena: That was their dish closet, and in that I have several things that have been given. This here is a wedding cake dish and was Sarah Thatcher of Yarmouthport's wedding, and she was married a hundred years ago this past June. And I got it in Florida. A woman there, her first husband was grandson of this Sarah Thatcher, and so she knew I had this house, so she gave it to me to bring back to the Cape, which I was very happy to have.

Q: It was a long route.

Verena: Yes, that's right. This cup and saucer was used by Frances Smith's great-grandmother, and she said she can remember when she was a little tiny girl, watching her grandmother sip her coffee out of it.

Q: It's a flowered, gold-trimmed cup.

Verena: Yes. Extra large size. And there's one place on the saucer where the gold is off, and I figured she must have sipped her coffee out of the saucer in the same place every time.

Q: And the gold came off?

Verena: Yes.

Q: Any other stories on this cupboard?

Verena: Ths little teapot, an old lady down in the village where I am in Florida, her husband came from Truro. So she gave that to me a year ago last fall. When I went down, I stopped to see her

and she said, I've got something for you, Verena. So she said, I had this when I was a little girl. So a couple of months later, why, she passed away, so I was very happy that she gave it to me then.

Q: And you have a cut glass bowl over here in the corner.

Verena: That was my husband's mother's. That's that Thistle pattern.

Q: Now, any other stories here in the keeping room? You have plates over the fireplace. Any particular-- ?

Verena: No. I picked those up different places. I've had some of them for years and not realized there was anything special about them, only I liked them.

Q: And the musket?

Verena: That, when my husband was about twelve, this old man gave it to him. It's a double-barreled musket and it's I guess, pre-Revolutionary War. This powder horn was used in the Civil War. I helped a couple clean out their attic, cleaned out his mother's and father's attic after they were gone, so I got a few things like this, and that powderhorn was one of them.

That cuspidor, I got that down in Florida last year. We have a little auction at our village, and so one of the fellows put that brass spittoon in, so I bought it.

Q: And the furniture in here is yours?



Verena: Well, this chair here, we had money given to us by the Out-of-Town Taxpayers Association, a hundred fifty dollars, and then Mrs. Sparrow gave me a hundred dollars that year. So we had two hundred fifty dollars and I needed a chair, because we had overstuffed chairs in here when my husband was living, for comfort. And so we finally found this chair. Chairs, and of course everything in the antique line, is very expensive.

And this little candle someone gave us. I don't know who, because they gave it to Charlie [Clarke]. But they used to read or sew with that. You have to be careful of the hair.

Q: The candle is hooked over the rocker.

Verena: Yes. And that chair Fred Smith and his wife gave me, and that one Natalie Walker gave me. And the rest of the things were mine.

Q: Now, off of the keeping room to the right is a tiny little room that has a bed in it.

Verena: That was a rope bed, but it has been made over so it has a spring and a mattress. That bureau, pine bureau, I bought in an auction probably back in 1940 for two dollars. It was painted several coats of paint. Now they're worth-- well, over a hundred.

Q: At least. Okay, so let's go on to the next room over here. Right across the living room is another little room.

Verena: This was the mourning room.

Q: And what's the history of that?

Verena: Where they laid people out. You see, they didn't have any undertaking parlors, so they'd put them in here, and then the morning of the funeral, why, the undertaker would come and put them in the casket and put them in the parlor for the service. But they used it as a bedroom otherwise, other than that.

That old desk, I bought that in an old second-hand place years ago for five dollars. And this old Irishman, Pat Quirk, had a big barn and we used to go up Sunday mornings and see what he had, and everything was five dollars.

Q: What about the bed, Verena?

Verena: Well, that is a trundle bed, hand-made, and a rope bed, and that was Maurice Wiley's, came from his grandfather. I have that and then a crib upstairs came from the same place.

Q: And is there a story about the quilt?

Verena: No. That quilt I bought at a yard sale. It was an old one. It had just the top, so I put a bottom on it and I use it on there. It's just a small one, so it fitted it okay.

Q: Over here in the corner by the fireplace is a spinning wheel?

Verena: Well, that spinning wheel I bought at Pat's for five dollars, but that doesn't go with the house. That was understanding. My granddaughter, Pamela Gill, that belongs to her whenever she wants it, and it's understood. That's the only thing she wanted when I was going to give the house away.

Q: Any story behind it? You just bought it from this old man

for five dollars?

Verena: That's right. That's all, because I wanted a spinning wheel.

Q: Now, you have a nice shawl over a door that's between one of the bedrooms and the keeping room.

Verena: I don't know where it came from. It came amongst some other stuff. Charlie used to bring such stuff in here, see, and I didn't know where he even got it, you know. So I don't know, but it is really beautiful.

Q: Now this is-- what would you call this, the master bedroom?

Verena: This was a bedroom, yes. And this is a sleigh-back bed. And this ceremonial quilt was given to us last fall. These people moved to Florida and so they gave it to us. She didn't know how old, but I think it's probably in the middle 1800's, because I think it was made about the same time that the crazy quilts were made, and I know that crazy quilt was made between 1840-1850. They only used this like a wedding or a christening or something. They put it on their best bed to dress it up. They didn't use it every day. It has beads and buttons and jewelry and, of course, the embroidery is beautiful. All kinds of things.

Q: It's a beautiful thing.

Verena: And in beautiful condition, so we were lucky to get it.

Q: Certainly were. Now you have a fireplace in here too.

Verena: Oh yes. There's three fireplaces. And this board here

above this fireplace is thirty inches wide, so you can imagine the tree that it took. And they tell me that probably the lumber for this house came from Nova Scotia. They used to bring it down on a boat, and it took about four years to build a house like this, from the time they got the lumber to the time it was finished, because everything had to be done by hand. All the carving and things was done by hand tools. They didn't have any machines, of course.

That scoop there was used either in flour or sugar, and that came from old Sam Brackett's store in North Eastham.

This little oil can was my father and mother's when they were first married, and I used to fill lamps with that, because we lived on a farm where we had no electricity, and I hated to handle kerosene.

Q: And what is this other little object?

Verena: That there is a small fruit press, like if you're going to make apple jelly or something like that, they'd put it in there. The top is missing, but that is what it was.

Q: And over to the right we have a tiny little chair with a hole in i<sup>T</sup>

Verena: Yes. Sadie Flint gave me that. It's a little pot chair. And then I have a big pot chair over here, of course.

Q: Oh, and how old is that?

Verena: I don't know. I bought that at a second-hand place years ago. My brother-in-law was here and he wasn't able to get to the bathroom, so I happened to see it-- I was going to Providence and

I happened to see it, and I bought it for eleven dollars. I never refinished it, because it had the stencil and I thought I would just leave it the way it was.

Q: And you have two handsome chests. One is a marble top.

Verena: Well, this one I got part paid for helping clean out that attic. No pay I got, but I did get a few things. They had some beautiful antiques, but--

Q: What date was this?

Verena: Up in Mendon, I helped this couple clean out this attic, their folks. Beautiful old house. So I did get a few pieces, but I didn't get any of the real antiques. But that is a beautiful piece. And that there I got at the same time as that other bureau, for two dollars. Of course, it had fifteen coats of paint on it.

Q: You get down to the wood and it's gorgeous. Is there any story about the wallpaper?

Verena: No, they're all reproductions. Mostly-- I can't think now of the name, but they're reproductions of colonial papers. They've all been-- this one has been on for about thirty-five years, I guess. Twenty-five, thirty years. Of course, where it's closed up for the winter, there's no smoke from, you know, heat, and then nobody here happened to smoke, so it stays very nice.

Q: Is that a handkerchief collection?

Verena: Well, those four little handkerchiefs a woman from Wellfleet, an elderly lady, had them and she was going to sell them to that shop, the Soft Antique place, and I was working at the Community Exchange there last year, and she came in and wanted to know when that Exchange, the other place, was going to be open. Well, it wasn't open on Saturday afternoon. So she had this stuff she was going to sell. She had those little handkerchiefs, and they were made by-- hand-made by a Sunday School teacher when she was about six, seven, eight years old. So I bought them from her. I thought they were kind of cute.

Q: And the fans? Over the fireplace.

Verena: The fans? Well, this one was given me by Ruth Mayo, and that I can't just remember at the present moment. I'd like more fans, but they're hard to come by.

Q: Are they?

Verena: Yes. I've got to fix that one. It's kind of unglued.

Q: Well, anything else in this room now that you usually point out to people?

Verena: This set here came-- an old lady, she was in her nineties, she was a maiden lady in Uxbridge-- that's near where we lived. And she died and they were selling out the house, so I bought a lot of things. Among them was this set. And the house was her folks' house. She'd always lived there. So I don't know how old it is,

but it was imported from England.

Q: It's a commode set?

Verena: Yes, a commode set. The bowl was missing, but it really is-- and this brown is really extra nice, because most of them are blues and greens and things.

Q: Shall we go on to-- now what do you call the room across the hall here?

Verena: That's the parlor.

Verena:

Q: This is the parlor. /And this is the minister's cupboard, where they used to keep a little wine and glasses, so when he came to call they brought him in the parlor and then served a little refreshments. And I've collected these hand-painted things-- were mostly my shower or wedding gifts when I was married.

Q: And the glass is just things you've collected?

Verena: Yes.

Q: This little cupboard is to the right of the fireplace.

Now, the rocker in the corner over here by the fireplace?

Verena: Well, my husband gave that to me as an anniversary present. In the forties. I can't remember which one it was. We bought it at an antique place. It is a real old one.

Q: And the clock on the mantel?

Verena: Well, that I don't know any history. Somebody gave it to

me years ago. It was up in the attic. Before I knew anything about, or cared anything about antiques, it was up in the attic. It is an unusual one, so they tell me, people that collect clocks, the way of this marking business, but I really haven't been able-- it has the date in it, inside here. E. M. Walsh Company made the clock. I guess that was it.

Q: In Forestville, Connecticut. No, I can't see it either. It could be on the back or something. It looks like it might be around 1850.

Verena: Yes. It goes, but I don't bother to keep winding it, because you have to wind it all the time.

Q: Yes, we have one like that too. And these porcelain figurines on each side?

Verena: Well, those-- my great-grandmother bought those at  
  , like Robin Hood, you know? And  
she bought those in Edinborough, Scotland. So they've come down in  
the family. The robbers, and there was a pair of these vases.  
Dorcas, when she was young, broke one up home.

Q: And the trivets?

Verena: Those are just modern. The youngsters gave them to me one year. But I think they're kind of cute. And this marbletop table was my husband's mother's. That couch came from Harry Young's house. He had a house with beautiful antiques, and after they went, why,



the niece gave one-- after I gave the house to the Historical Society, why, she gave us that. It's really beautiful.

Q: And how about the piano?

Verena: That's a melodeon. That's the beginning of an organ. A woman-- she's a summer resident and I can't remember her name. That's a rosewood melodeon, about a hundred fifty years old. The bellows is good, but one of the rods that does the pumping is gone. So it doesn't play, but I really don't care too much.

Q: There's a picture of George Washington. Is that the Gilbert Stuart reproduction?

Verena: Yes. And that was issued in 1876, the hundredth anniversary. Helen Clarke found it in the attic rolled up with some papers of her father's. And we never found the Martha Washington. We've been looking for the Martha Washington, but haven't been able to find it.

Q: Then you also have two portraits hanging over here. Are they your family?

Verena: No, we haven't any portraits of anybody we know. Those pictures, the frames are outstanding, old, and then the way they're printed is some electrolysis process that's supposed to last for a long-- almost forever. And that's the reason we took them. They are valuable.

Q: And the frames are.

Verena: Yes that's right. That double lamp is very unusual. I

haven't had anyone that's come in here yet that ever saw one. They're all single. Somebody gave that to me years ago and it was up in the attic. I don't know who gave it to me.

Q: This is a double standard lamp that holds two kerosene lamps.

Verena: Yes, that's right.

Q: Now you have over here a tiny chair with a teddy bear.

Verena: Well, that belonged to Virginia Horton. Clayton Horton gave it to me after Virginia passed away. And her sister told me that she even took that teddy bear to college with her.

Q: And the chair?

Verena: That was her's. The chair and the teddy bear.

Q: Now we have another little corner over here with a very tiny marble-top table.

Verena: Well, that went with a black walnut bedroom set. The bureau and the commode are upstairs and the bed is in the attic, and that table went with it, and I thought it was so cute. It went with this table. That I bought at home at an auction for practically nothing, the whole set.

Q: And the little chair, the rocker?

Verena: Well, that chair came from the same place. And I bought quite a few things at that time. This old lady passed away and

they were selling her house, you know.

Q: Shall we go upstairs, Verena? I think we've covered the--

Verena: The carpet in here was Howard Walker's grandmother's parlor carpet. It was handwoven on a loom and the colors stayed beautifully.

Q: It is gorgeous. Really beautiful. And this little rug too?

Verena: Yes. And this is a ship's cabin stairway. Then this is a candle table, a real old one. That I bought at an auction and they're very expensive. That is an old ladderback chair that I bought. That has the original seat.

Q: What did you call the stairs again?

Verena: A ship's cabin stairway. And these boards here are sawed with an old up and down saw. You can see how rough they are. And they're very unusual, they're so old.

Q: So wide too.

Verena: Yes, all the boards are wide. This is a cannonball bed and it also is tiger maple. You can see the stripes. And then this quilt has a date on it, 1841. And this is a rope bed with the featherbeds on it.

Q: Has anyone ever slept on it?

Verena: No. No, because I had the black walnut bedroom set in here before. And this was my husband's mother's blanket chest,

because they used to have a lot of blankets and quilts they stored in the summertime.

And this is the crib that came from Maurice Wiley's. It was his grandfather's. All hand-made. And this is a little hand-made pot chair that came from the same place.

These two chairs Bernard Collins gave us.

Q: Those are two straight chairs. Pine?

Verena: Yes, pine. The washstand I bought at an antique place and refinished it. This spread here was made in England by Bessie Walters' first husband's mother. It's quite intriguing, the way it's knit. I've never found out how it's done.

Q: Tiny, tiny needles.

Verena: Yes, that's right. And it's about a hundred years old. Better than a hundred years old. 1845. What amazes me is the condition everything is in, and the lace and everything is perfect.

And this is a Nottingham curtain. They don't make them any more. Years ago, if anyone had Nottingham lace curtains in their parlor, why, they were somebody, because they were very expensive. And this was made in 1872. Bessie Walters gave it to me.

And this here is for a horse's ears to put on, made out of fish netting, a hand-made one, to keep the flies off, and this picture here is the horse that wore it.

This shows a bill for shoeing this horse, two dollars. A man was in the other day and he said, you know how much I paid the other

day to have my horse shod? I said, no. He said, forty dollars. Couldn't hardly believe it. Quite a change.

Q: Yes, indeed. Well, there's a tiny little bedroom over here.

Verena: That's a hand-made real old bed. And then another little pot chair. Sadie gave me that. She had two evidently. And this stand here, I can remember we had one in our kitchen and my father used to keep his shaving things here and keep newspapers up here. I guess the old straight razors, they used to take a newspaper and wipe them in between.

Q: Yes, I sort of remember my father having one of those. Then we have off here-- this is the attic more or less, isn't it?

Verena: Yes, the open attic, and it's all pegged together. Boarded up and down, you see. Because nails were scarce then and expensive, so they used wooden pegs. And the inside here is all the original. Of course, it's been resingled, but the beams and everything are original.

Q: And there's a little chest?

Verena: Well, that is part of the bedroom set. That was a commode.

Q: Now you have, Verena, quite a collection of clothes here.

Verena: Yes. They come from various people. I didn't have any old clothes. So these have all been given by, you know, different ones. But the handwork is really outstanding. So much handwork. It took hours to do.

Q: What would you say, they were about a hundred years old, a lot of them?

Verena: Yes. Practically everything here is about a hundred years old. Somewhere in the 1870's, '80's and '09's. Because some of them had been put away in attics for years. One woman that gave me a lot of things, her mother died-- at that time, this was five years ago she gave them to me-- and at that time her mother died fifteen years ago, and these three trunks had been up in her mother's attic. She took them to her attic and they'd been there for fifteen years in her attic. So she just got around to open them, so I really got a lot of nice things.

Q: A lot of nice loot, yes. There is a stairway over here.

Verena: Well, that was the back stairs that comes up from the keeping room.

Q: I see. But that's closed off now?

Verena: Well, it can be used, but we don't let anybody come up, because they're so steep. So I keep something and don't let them come up.

Q: Now you have a costume room around the corner in here, which used to be a bedroom, I take it?

Verena: That's right.

Q: And where did you get the mannequins?

Verena: Well, one mannequin came from the schoolhouse. It needed

repairing, so Dorcas is a pretty good repairer, so she repaired it. And it's got a new leg, I guess. And then I went to the stores and I got one through Watson's store. Then there's dress forms. I picked up different-- I had one and my sister had one and a couple others I had given to me by just talking, you know. So I could use more.

Q: You have some photograph albums here on the table.

Verena: These two albums, 1910 and 1909, are a collection of postcards that this Virginia Horton, who was a schoolteacher, collected, and they are really rare.

Q: And the other one is a Godey's Lady's Book, is it?

Verena: Not a Godey's. It's very similar. It's a Graham's Magazine, 1850, and it's very similar to Godey's. I keep that under cellophane, because it's quite tender. These others, I fixed them in cellophane, so that they could be handled.

This calendar is 1893 and these little pictures of little girls are quite attractive.

Q: Beautiful. Just a charming thing.

Verena: We're lucky that some people saved everything.

Q: Yes, I know. I know. This is a generation that seems to toss things an awful lot.

Verena: This here is a fascinator. You've seen pictures of Queen Victoria? She always wore one. They wore them afternoons or evenings.

And this was an 1850 wedding dress. It's really just like sheeting, but the handwork is quite-- and it's all blind buttonholes.

Q: You have one with a bustle here, don't you?

Verena: Yes. This dress was Robert Sparrow's mother's dress. She lived in Eastham. And this here is a combination hoop skirt and bustle form. I never saw one before. This Blanche Keith gave me. It was her grandmother's. See, the dress is absolutely made for a bustle. And the lace on these silk scarves is really outstanding. Perfect condition.

Q: Now, let's see. Any other stories up here?

Verena: Well, we have a hat here and this woman's grandmother's going away hat. Isn't that cute?

Q: Isn't that darling? Who gave it to you?

Verena: Aline Van Houten. It was her grandmother's. And this is a little beaver muff someone gave us. And another woman gave us these four bonnets. Her grandmother's quilted winter one and a summer sunbonnet, and then her velvet best one and her straw best one.

Q: And who is that?

Verena: Well, that is nothing. Dorcas made that in school, but this little bonnet went on it and the little shawl, so I just put it there.

Q: Perfectly darling. And here's another wedding dress, right?



Verena: Yes. And this shawl is really beautiful. I imagine it was imported.

Q: That is gorgeous, and this was worn by Marianne Jenks Cook.

Verena: Yes. I knew her youngest daughter, and then her older daughter lives over in Brewster now. She's eighty-nine and she gave me the dress and the scarf.

Q: So that actually was a Cape-- ?

Verena: No, they lived in Milford, Mass. That's when I went to school there, and her younger daughter went to school with me.

And the wool in these things. This is a wool little cape. It's so soft.

And this is all hand-made. This is a hoop skirt and all made by hand, and on the sleeves they've got these little special buttons, little gold, with an "S". Her name was Sarah. Imagine they were very expensive, because the other buttons are very ordinary.

Q: And this is her picture?

Verena: That's her picture.

Q: She was an Eastham-- ?

Verena: Yes. Sarah Doane Rogers. And that little suit on the boy is a Buster Brown suit, and that was worn by this *Almond* Nickerson. That was Virginia Horton's brother. And he was in here about a week or so ago with his son. So he got quite a kick, because

he'd never been in before, and he got quite a kick out of seeing his suit on a little model.

Q: He didn't know it was here?

Verena: Oh yes, I think he knew, because his sister, I guess, asked him if it was all right when she gave it to me.

And this christening dress is really outstanding. The embroidery took hours and hours to do.

Q: And the baby wore it once. Of course, they were passed down from generation to generation in those days.

Verena: Yes. All kinds of little boots and socks.

(END OF TAPE)